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THE HYBRID WORK OF ART AS EXPERIENCE

Abstract

This article focuses on the hybrid work of art viewed as a form of experience. The issue taken into consideration is hybrid work of art viewed as a form of experience from the perspective of how Dewey wrote about art which can be perceived as a form of experience. How can we understand the notion of experience in relation to a work of art, and, more importantly, to a hybrid work of art? The analysis of the experience category is based on the philosophical texts written by Luigi Pareyson. The question explored is whether hybrid works of art portray the experience of contemporary reality. The poems of Paula Claire (ES-SENSE and Hymns to Isis) and the artistic book by Jim Butler (A.M.D.G) are taken into consideration.

Key words: hybrid work of art, experience, Luigi Pareyson, contemporary reality

The reference in the title of the following article to John Dewey's work entitled *Art as Experience* is naturally not accidental. The question being explored is concerned with what type of thought about art was suggested by Dewey. He opposed the divisions according to which the aesthetic sphere is divided from the sphere of cognition or morality. We could even say that he hoped, similarly to the Avant-garde representatives, that the world can be filled up with the salutary power of art. The philosopher claimed that every cognitive experience has its own aesthetic component, and contrary to Kant's postulations, we should acknowledge that even morality is not deprived of aesthetic aspects. Dewey emphasized that:

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"(...) any practical activity, provided that it is integrated and moves by its own urge to fulfillment, have esthetic quality" (Dewey 2005: 41). Dewey regarded the aesthetic experience to be a complete experience which cannot be described in purely psychological terms from the perspective of the evaluating subject. The philosopher found that the real object, which serves as basis for the experience is equally important. Dewey believed that different things can evoke such reactions. However, he emphasized that the modern world is not favorable if we want to experience reality deeply. As Dewey said:

Zeal for doing, lust for action, leaves many a person, especially in this hurried and impatient human environment in which we live, with experience of an almost incredible paucity, all on the surface. No one experience has a chance to complete itself because something else is entered upon so speedily. What is called experience becomes so dispersed and miscellaneous as hardly to deserve the name (Dewey 1975: 57).

Surely it is not hard to agree with Dewey's statements, nevertheless these remarks can be considered trivial by the following article's readers. If we wanted to use a simplifying outline, we could say that aesthetic experience in the modern world is no longer experience in general, as perceived by Dewey, (the experience which can refer to art and other elements of reality), but it can also describe the mental and physical dimension of experiencing the world. Wolfgang Welsh defines this process as the reconfiguration of *aisthesis*:

Furthermore, a reconfiguration of *aisthesis* can today be observed. For instance, one of the consequences of media dominance is the challenging of the primacy of vision which has shaped occidental culture since the Greeks, and which culminates in the television age. Contemporary critique of ocularcentrism has other reasons too, but the experience of media constitutes an important factor (Welsch 2005: 126).

The reconfiguration of *aisthesis* is a result of changes in modern culture, with developing media technologies at its head. However, it is also an expression of changes occurring in art itself. The newly evoking artistic forms require from their recipients the type of perception in which none of the senses is still dominant.

Generally, working on the problem of experience may turn out to be inconclusive, and potential conclusions can be futile. This problem raises extreme opinions in terms of both its importance and aptness when taken into academic considerations. It is not easy to get clear conclusions from scholars who are interested in this issue. It has not been declared

how we should understand the notion of experience and neither by Martin Jay, author of *Songs of Experience: Modern American and European Variations on a Universal Theme*, nor in Poland by Dorota Wolska in her book *Odzyskać doświadczenie. Sporny temat humanistyki współczesnej.* (To Regain Experience: a Disputable Problem of Contemporary Humanities). However, even scholars, who are most skeptical about the experience and who question its significance for any scholarly activity, admit at the same time that it is extremely difficult not to refer to this sphere of human life in humanities studies. Surely, the notion of experience is fairly common in everyday life, and people must be very familiar with it while living in the world. All this could be confirmed by remarks made by Roger-Pol Droit in his article *The Magnitude of Experience*, which is known to Polish readers thanks to the translation published in the magazine *Teksty Drugie (Second Texts)*:

Of course we could try to build a term for experience <<in general>>, but it would be pretty unclear. I do not wish to penetrate the thicket of philosophical considerations on experience because we are both fortunate and unfortunate to deal with the term which has always had an undetermined meaning, and which is one of the most common terms (it has been a good experience, I haven't experienced it before etc.); and which possesses a wide range of theoretical meanings – in its proper sense – in philosophers' works. (...) I am afraid that we will not achieve anything in next years if we analyze the problem from the standpoint of its genealogy (Droit 2006: 106–107).

Droit claims that every experience has a binary nature: passive and active, it is always felt and "given" (cf. Droit 2006: 107). From the standpoint of the following deliberations, the issue of "giving" experience, which of course influences the other aspect – feeling, is more significant. How does it happen then that the experience of an author becomes contained in the work? Is it justified to think that the hybrid work, existing in the borderline between literature and visual arts, is a consequence of experiencing the modern world? Does the structure of hybrid works reflect in a specific way the multi-layered complexity and simultaneity, the vagueness of the postmodern reality? What makes artists choose a hybrid form, and not another one? We could hazard a guess that hybrid works are structured in a way which enables them to communicate that it is impossible to grasp the sense on the level of reality. The aporetic nature of reality can be seen through the visuality integrated with the word. The first thing we should ask is what kind of works can be considered hybrid.

Hybrid nature of the work of art

As users of modern culture we live in the space which is more and more frequently filled with heterogeneous works, consisting of two or more carriers of sense. What we have in mind is visual poetry, concrete poetry, cybernetic and digital poetry, the artistic book, and liberature. Each of the enumerated types of work operating on the borderline between literature and visual arts is somehow hybrid in nature. It is easy to notice that some of the numbered artistic forms are thought to be a part of the world of works of arts, supposing we still acknowledge works of art to be a valid category, whereas some of them are considered to be literary works.

Seemingly the problem does not sound complicated. On account of genre concrete poetry can be derived from the tradition of visual poetry, dating back to antiquity and various avant-garde movements, starting from parole in libertà of Marinetti, through to calligrammes by Appolinaire, ending at *A Throw of the Dice will Never Abolish Chance* by Mallarmé; and we can consider it a literary experiment. An artistic book, which is the foremost recognize museum piece in the Polish tradition, can be easily acknowledged as art. Liberatic authors call their works literary ventures, thus we could count them among literary works of avant-garde provenances. Surely it is more difficult to immediately classify the works which come to life through so called new media. However, we can frequently hear that what we deal with here are literary works involved in the context of multimedia. After having this simplified we can see that new artistic phenomena can be easily recognized as something secondary which only takes advantage of a new or different medium.

In hybrid works it is of utmost importance that there are two ontological orders joined together, that is to say: the physical sphere of the work as well as its intentionality in terms of Ingarden's ideas. At this point I am referring to the Ingarden's theory because there we can clearly see that the task performed by the matter is reduced to registering, it does not play an important part. The material sphere of the literary work enables us, in Ingarden's opinion, to reach the intentionality included in the work in the process of specification. In the case of hybrid works their materiality does not cause the depreciation of their intentional sphere if we wanted to use Ingarden's terminology, and the process of specification includes the non-language aspects. The crucial part is played by the physical space of the work because the matter itself performs an important semantic func-

tion as well. The category of hybrid works indicates the individual character of a particular work. Thanks to the mythological references it presents some kind of cognitive uneasiness which is felt by the recipient after he or she encounters the work in which a visual sign is integrated with a verbal sign. In the case of hybrid work the disturbing quality is its heterogeneity, putting together various elements which do not surprise us individually, but when they are pieced together, they form a being: a strange, disturbing, and not existing as claimed by Aristotle, being¹.

The term; hybrid work, similarly to Higgins' term; intermedia, enables us to put works in the right order from the borderline between literature and visual arts, and we do not have to decide whether a particular work belongs to the world of literary works or to the world of works of art. By using this term from the whole range of examples of art or nonart, literature and non-literature we can distinguish works in which text and picture have been so integrated that as a result of this artistic process a new aesthetic quality has been evoked. In the case of these works words are not a decoration of the picture, and images are not an ornamentation to add variety to the text. The term intermedia shows what relations are present between particular fields of art in specific artistic currents. By using the category of hybrid work we can show that a work from the borderline between literature and visual arts constitutes a kind of organic whole, like mythical hybrids, however, we can demonstrate in the whole that one element comes from one field of art, and the other one - from a different artistic field, and at the same time we can search for tools to

¹ The followers of Aristotle did not acknowledge a hybrid as a compound of two different natures. According to Aristotle these beings fail to come into existence because they appear without a purpose. Due to the nature's functionality the only beings which can exist are adequate and in conformity with nature. It is worth emphasizing that we will not find the term "hybrid" in the works by Aristotle. In the works Generation of Animals and Problems the philosopher discusses some anomalies about monsters. A monster is born when "[...] the movements (originating from the male) cease and the material (provided by the female) is not under their control, then what remains is the most general in being, and that is <<animal>>. The new born, as we used to say, has a head of a ram or an ox" (Aristotle 1979: 181). Similar anomalies can be observed among animals. The representative of one genus can have the head of another one. According to Aristotle monsters are scarcely similar to creatures they are said to be similar to. Therefore, the philosopher believes that they do not exist. Moreover, he claims that the being which is born must be the same as the being which provides the semen. From the horse's semen only a horse can be born, from a man only a man, in other cases we cannot call the being which is born an offspring. "For that reason our offspring is not something which comes from a different part of our body, or something that is corrupted or distorted" (Aristotle 1980: 62).

describe a particular hybrid. However, there is lesser risk that one of the languages will become more appreciated. The term hybrid emphasizes that in the case of concrete poetry, an artistic book, liberature, and new media works we face as unusual forms, a being for which the substantial dimension is essential, working on the assumption that it is ephemeral and frequently for use once only, and relations existing inside of the being are hard to grasp and analyze.

When we say form, what we have in mind is form understood as an organic whole in which it is impossible to display the insides and outsides of a work. In the case of hybrid works we can recognize meaningful aspects of both the language's and the material's structure. That is why from this article's perspective the idea of Luigi Pareyson is significant since he acknowledges the work of art to be the form in which there is no division into form and content. According to Luigi Pareyson's theory of formativity the formation process of the work of art comprises of all its elements, including the matter which becomes essential.

The centre of Pareyson's theory constitutes formativity² which is a merge of formation i.e. production, and invention i.e. the way something is produced. The scholar believe that every human activity has a formative character, in other words, it is both production and invention at the same time (Kasia 2008: 19). In reference to art, the scholar determines formativity as content, matter, law. The content of the work of art (il contenuo) is the artist's whole life, his or her operating personality, not only the energy behind the formation but also the manner of formation, that is "style" (Kasia 2008: 19). If the content of the work of art is identified with the style, there is no longer a need to have a dispute concerning the primacy of form over content, or of content over form because the spiritual element of the work from this perspective is style precisely. We cannot talk of other modes of expressing, saying and conveying but production. For the researcher the matter of the work of art can be only and exclusively the physical substance because when we talk about formation in art, we have in mind the formation of matter (Kasia 2008: 19), that is to say, the work of art is formed matter.

² Formatività is a key term in the aesthetics of Pareyson, it is a neologism in Italian. By using the neologism Pareyson draws attention to one of the most important aspects of form to him, which is its active nature. That is why the Polish translator also provides a neologism – formativity. She believes that none of the previously used terms "formation" and "form-creation" renders the Italian formatività. However, by having this frequently appear in the text the Italian term could disturb the reading. Cf. Kasia 2008:19.

Particular works of art are permeated with the precise understanding and the morality of particular artists, their individual way of thinking and acting, the specific interpretation of reality and attitude towards life. "What we are discussing here is the person's whole life, his or her specific and complete spirituality, his or her individual and impossible to replace experience, which, by relying on the rule of concentrating all activities in an exact operation, must in a way enter into art" (Kasia 2008: 37). It is important for the artist to focus on producing the form, and not on the formation of thoughts, activities, virtues, character traits or objects meant for a specific aim. In favour of focusing on the form production is finding the right matter to form. Otherwise the pure formativity could turn out to be an abstraction, not set in the matter and deprived of "body". Once formed matter in the shape of pure form guarantees the autonomy of the work of art³.

While following the line of thought of Pareyson, we cannot talk about spirit and body in reference to the work of art because the work of art has a meaning due to its sensual existence and physicality. In the work of art there is nothing spiritual that would not be physical as well.

In Pareyson's terms we talk about the autonomy of the work of art when the philosopher writes about the completeness of the work of art (Compiutezza dell' opera d'arte): "The artistic perfection is not motionless and fixed but it is dynamic in its definite character, and its definite nature is the completion of formation process" (Kasia 2008: 112). The completion of the formation process happens when *lo spunto* matures, when the work of art becomes independent, that is to say there are no more author's changes, it becomes complete, closed, total and ready for interpretations (Cf. Kasia 2008: 81). Lo spunto is a moment in which the formative intentionality turns into an act of clearly defined purpose. At the time when an artist finds *lo spunto*, an impulse of some kind, he or she feels that a given work is going to be born, a specific form. We can assume that the artist narrows his or her vision of the world to one point, he or she yields to the transcendent power, which becomes real through the artist. The formation process would never take place if it were not for the artist. Lo spunto is motionless, it is the semen which is set free and gives direction to creative energy, it must mature to become a work of art (Kasia 2008: 67). Kasia compares Pareyson's idea of lo spunto to Martin Heidegger's interpretation of the source of the work of art: "The source is used here in the meaning of something from which and through which a thing is, what it is and how it is" (Heidegger 1997: 7). Nevertheless, the category of lo spunto remains mysterious, since we cannot point out its sources of origin, what we know is how it operates. Pareyson does not conclude if it is the manifestation of transcendent power or if it is of an inherent quality in the world. Surely this category is meant to explain the details of the formation process, which is to say, a widely understood artistic activity. It is the semen, and then the embryo of the work of art, the right to independent organization. The formation cannot be improvised because it relies on the information included in lo spunto.

The physical and spiritual elements of the work are identical because formation of the work is not formation of the content but rather formation of the matter. The meaning of the work should be acknowledged as its physical existence and unity which causes the aesthetic experience that is interpretation.

The importance of the material aspect of the artistic work is also emphasized by Wolfgang Welsch: "Thus we are today learning to value anew the resistibility and unchangeability of the natural as opposed to the universal mobility and changeability of media-worlds, and in the same way the persistence of the concrete as opposed to the free play of information, the massivity of matter as opposed to the levitation of imagery" (Welsch 2005: 128). The unceasing presence of electronic media bears in people the longing for individuality, as well as for physicality. However, Welsch emphasizes that he does not have in mind the thirst for returning to the sensual experience from before the age of electronics, the revalidation of the electronic experience in some measure results from the electronic one, and between both experiences there are numerous relations. In this context a good example is liberature which originates from some type of opposition against the omnipresent remediation which, at the same time, does not restrain Zenon Fajfer from using electronic media in his works.

Form, experience, cognition

Thus we are dealing with a triad of terms which are linked with each other in a hybrid work: the experience, the form originating from the experience, and the process of cognition which accompanies both the work's creator, who interprets his or her experience, and the recipient, who strives to perceive the work's form.

The relation between experience and form seems to have some features of circularity. It can be proven after we reflect on the forms of works. The recipients give their attention to the work's form, meant to present the man-subject and his or her experiences, and they discover that the relation between the form and the experience of the subject, if we apply the traditional categories of poetics, is circular⁴. Namely, the experience finds its form of expression and the work's form shapes the experience in

⁴ The problem of the circular character of the relation between form and experience has been widely discussed by Antonina Lubaszewska in her book *The Poetics of Spiritual Experience: In the Direction of the Anthropology of Literary Forms,* Cracow 2009.

question, helps to recognize it. Antonina Lubaszewska in her book on the poetics of spiritual experience raises a question how the circularity manifests itself in literature (cf. Lubaszewska 2009: 9). Are we able, thanks to the form, the work's poetics, to recognize the experiences in search for their form, and what forms impose a structure on the experience? (cf. Lubaszewska 2009: 9). The author reflects on the notion of anthropological experience. However, in her research she refers to the biographies and works of St. Francis of Assisi, the Four Senses of the Bible, and the Desert Fathers; and she analyzes the widely understood spiritual experience, not necessarily in the religious sense. At this point, the article's reader could ask how the problem of experience and providing the hybrid work with the term of experience are typical of such artistic works. The modern art expresses the artist's experiences as well, it takes advantage of various carriers of meaning (e.g. conceptualism, text-art, or performance). What characterizes the relation between the form and the experience in the case of a hybrid work?

Generally, the experience is a relation as compared to what is outside, it is a result of the contrast with an alien element inside of us. What one must experience is not what he or she can conclude (cf. Droit 2006: 107). The recipient of a hybrid work (of other works as well) experiences it simultaneously as his or her own experience, and, at the same time, as a record of someone else's experience, since the form is the expression of spiritual experience, and also it is used to shape the experience. It needs emphasizing that we cannot indicate the works that would not constitute the form because the form as a manner of experiencing becomes attainable when it applies the measures enabling the recipient to experience something in a particular way. Even the creator who strives to free himself or herself from the forms does so through the form viewed as a result of the process of formation (if we apply the Pareyson's category).

The formation process of a hybrid work seems to differ in the sense that these works are formed as individual works in which the relation between the picture, word and sound is not in any way established. Hybrids do not create genres of clearly determined features. Surely they refer to numerous genological distinctions, in some works we can observe the contamination of different genres, and however, this process has no clearly distinguished frames, like in the case of opera or comic books which can hardly be recognized as hybrids. The attempt to interpret a hybrid every time resembles a case study in which it is difficult to find the clear rules of the reception process. Some readers could surely question the following argument and admit that in fact in art in the majority of cases we deal with

hybrid works. It is worth taking into consideration that generic frames in art are not as essential as in literature, which has already been discussed by, among others, Jerzy Ludwiński:

(...) particular genres of art, related to the purity of their own methods, floated to the separated destinations at different depths of reality. It was difficult to compare them, though from time to time their routes seemed parallel, and particular stages were astonishingly similar. As the movement was becoming faster and faster, and the artistic genres swelled with the new contents, the whole background – nobody's space between them – was slowly getting filled up. Here, where different fields were joined, the most fascinating things were happening; methods were crossing, conventions were losing sense, new tendencies and genres were being born such as concrete poetry, land-art, environment, happening, conceptual art, open theatre. Can anyone say today what we can still call music, art or theatre? Is it possible to determine correctly the border between the art and the rest of reality? Some say that everything can be music, poetry, theatre, everything can be art (Ludwiński 2009: 138–139).

Hybrid works are individual works of art, in the case of which the form of a specific work is typical of a single copy or of a series of copies, if we take into consideration artistic and liberatic books published in greater number of copies. If we compared *Spoglądając przez ozonową dziurę (But Eyeing Like Ozone Layer)* and *Oka-lecznie (Mute-I-Late)* by Zenon Fajfer and Katarzyna Bazarnik, we could easily notice that these two examples of hybrid works have been formed in a different way. Firstly, the book has taken the shape of a bottle in which on a transparent foil they have written a poem, and it has been placed in cardboard, and has been provided with a title and ISBN. Meanwhile, *Mute-I-Late* has taken the form of a triptych where we can find three different stories. For the listed works in the formation process a particular form has been chosen, its unique form. Therefore, what characterizes a hybrid work is its unique form. Thus it is of utmost significance to pay attention to every one of the works individually. Ryszard Nycz calls this process a "multidimensional case study" and recognizes it as the poetics of experience:

The poetics of experience (...) which in practice assumes the form of a multidimensional case study does not refer to the assumed individual features, separate objects, "native" methods and theories; it declares its own non-paradigmatic and transdisciplinary character, and the "weak" interpretation as a fundamental strategy of research approach (Nycz 2007: 47).

Surely the type of interpretation suggested by Ryszard Nycz enables us to treat particular works as individuals, and we cannot say anything about them until the recipient starts to perceive it. In the case of hybrids it is im-

possible to pass judgments a priori on the work on the basis of its genre affiliation. We could paraphrase the statement of Roger-Pol Droit that a hybrid work is such an experience which cannot be concluded if we do not stay in touch with it. However, is it possible to perceive a hybrid work in such a non-paradigmatic and transdisciplinary manner? Finally, experience is possible if we perceive something according to the established, imposed, chosen categories. No subject is able to grasp "the flowing current of life".

To confirm this statement we can look into Herbert Read's book *The Origins of Form in Art* in which the author examines the essential sense of the form. Read believes that the art's task is not only to present but also to reach the deepest sources of cognition, which he puts in the following words: "art is an ability given to humans to distinguish the form from the chaotic whirl of its impressions, as well as to contemplate the form in its uniqueness" (Read 1973: 13). The scholar further notices: "if the form goes ahead of the human experience, we are entitled to expect that the awareness of the form has been received by people from their natural environment, and then they have spontaneously imitated it in the creations of their own hands. However, what has been imitated is the form, not the phenomenon, and the form has been symbolic" (Read 1973: 86). From Read's deliberations we can conclude that one can constitute his or her identity thanks to the artistic process of creation, and he or she can provide a frame to their own experiences.

We can notice that Georg Simmel speaks in a similar tone in his highly popular work Bridge and Door, where in one of the essays on fashion he introduces a term "basic forms of life". These basic forms of life, as defined by Simmel, are produced by a subject when he or she forms the specific matter, and at the same time he or she builds through the process the world of contents which are significant for this individual work. The subject touches the world, which moves constantly, and to whom the subject gives meaning. Then, as Simmel believes, the process of experiencing the world has contents, it produces internal objects: images, terms, knowledge; whereas they have their own meaning and substance, importance and order - different from the purely monotonous order of events. These contents, spiritual shapes assumed by existence, appear in some order: above all, in the mind of the subject who presents them to himself or herself. Therefore, the world is seen from the perspective of a centre which causes distances, accents, perspective shifts and cuts of the sensual and spiritual nature, without counterparts in the objective dimension of being.

Concrete Poetry as Experience

How can we relate the category of experience to concrete poetry?⁵ In fact as readers of traditional poetry, we are used to reading in a poem which conveys content through metaphors, comparisons, and other various poetical measures. The lyrical I describes the world, his or her own experiences, informs about his or her adventures which in diverse ways are included in the poem. In the case of concrete poetry we cannot acknowledge that it conveys information on emotions, lyrical It's experiences, it does not describe the world in which the subject exists and which it experiences.

The statement that concrete poetry belongs to the universe of hybrid works is thought to be controversial. It seems that the solution of the dispute over the affiliation of concrete poetry has already been provided by Stefania Skwarczyńska who derives it from the sources of a phenomenon which obtains things from the synthesis of arts viewed as a tradition. At the same time she emphasizes that discussion over and interpretation of concrete poetry goes beyond the language in the linguistic sense, in this case the language of art must be used, which in my opinion serves as an argument to place concrete poems among hybrid works ("If we intend to define the poetics of concrete poetry, hence its language as well, the scholarly poetics will have to shift contrary to its practice with <<traditional poetry>> - from the sphere of semantics to the orbit of semiotics. It means that it is going to deal not only with the language in the linguistic sense, but also with non-linguistic languages, and to be more exact and ad rem: with the language of art, that is to say with linguistic signs and iconic signs. The characteristics of concrete poetry would be problematic enough to overcome the understandable tendencies of semiology to put languages in order on the basis of their signs' homogeneity" Skwarczyńska 1977: 27). Even if we consider concrete poems to be physical objects in which it is impossible to separate word and picture, we should remember that in the reception process the recipient immediately separates one from the other and does not perceive concrete poetry as text and picture at the same time. Concrete poetry constitutes a hybrid because it is an expression of realizing by artists which are mechanisms of the language – its semantic and spatial nature. Thanks to the combination of poetry, visual art and music a new being is evoked which realizes the nature of language. Because of that concrete poets think that they have created a new language, and concrete poetry originates from the yearning for a new universal language in the face of its contemporary crisis. The language of concrete poetry is a turn towards visual text, the language turns out to be a hybrid, if we reduce it to a single word, and we notice in it "possibilities of the intrinsic orientation of the word to its own existence, to its own sign nature, structure and sense at the same time. The word with its clear meaning, sound and shape, thus the clearly impossible to notice self-definition has begun to serve as a base of a poem, its foundation, concrete", as written by Małgorzata Dawidek Gryglicka (Dawidek-Gryglicka 2012: 68). Małgorzata Dawidek-Gryglicka also refers to the above mentioned article of Stefania Skwarczyńska in her work on the visual text that made me draw my attention to the text, and I would like to express my gratitude for that reason.

Tadeusz Sławek notices that this type of poetry ignores "the Ptolemaic system of literature, concentrated around the author who in the work conveys his or her experiences" (Sławek 1989: 58). However, it does not mean that concrete poets do not refer to reality. They do so, but they refer to the language reality which is based on the elements of the real world. In concrete poetry the ties between the reality and the medium, which is a concrete poem in this case, are torn apart. The important part is played by the tension between linguistic elements, their meaning, picture and sound. All these elements joined together become an individual object, and, at the same time, a new universal language. Thanks to becoming independent from particular elements of the real world concrete poetry can penetrate various contexts of reality, which depends on who perceives the given work. It can become a way of experiencing reality.

In this context I would like to refer to a poem by Paula Claire⁶ entitled ES-SENSE which is one (No 9) of the eighteen typographical poems produced on the basis of words: sense, nonsense, essence, quintessence, sensation, sensuous, sensual, sensitive⁷. The poems have been produced on a typewriter by writing the basic texts, and then by means of copying they have been put one on the other to obtain complex images. They are both visual and sound poems which are used by Paula Claire in her performances.

If we look carefully at the poem in question, we will surely notice the words sense and essence, vibrating and concentrating in some places, depending on the world-view we prefer.

Therefore, as I have already mentioned, concrete poetry penetrates the various contexts of reality, and as recipients in the perception process we are able to experience the universal, lingual and visual performance which enables us to focus on our experiences and reflections.

None of the elements of a concrete poem needs to be omitted: recipients can focus on the words, their visual form or meaning, they can refer to their own reflections and experiences, possibly to metaphysical ones as well.

It needs emphasizing that in the case of hybrids of this kind we can talk of contemplation as if it was the culmination of the process of perceiving a work, considering we do not deal here with a riddle, a puzzle needed

⁶ Paula Claire is a British poet, artist, performer; she produces visual poetry, concrete poetry, sound poetry, artistic books, and performances. She has worked with Bob Cobbing. She lives in Oxford. She has established the archive of concrete poetry in Oxford – The Paula Claire Archive of Sound and Visual Poetry. We can find more information on the artist and her works on the website www.paulaclaire.com.

⁷ Published as International Concrete Poetry Archive No 31, 1992.

to be solved in order to get through to the visual perception of a work or the other way around – to examine it from the visual perspective, and then to provide its meaning.

What can lead to contemplation are only the relentless interpretative actions: making inquiries, questioning, finding solutions, reaching as deep as possible.

The contemplation itself is seeing form as if it was form, obtaining a new way of seeing, it is a state of aesthetic pleasure (*il piacere estetico*) the source of which is beauty. Pareyson writes:

Contemplation is not disturbed, it is entirely enclosed within its own gentleness, it is deprived of emotions and passions. Contemplation is *catharsis* because within its immobility life stops and there is a break, the tumult of feelings and affections gets quieter, even though its climax is the capture and ecstasy, and the one who contemplates, by gaining the view of a clairvoyant, forgers about himself, he is wholly included in the object, the subject almost gets out of himself. (Pareyson 2009: 225).

Another work by Paula Claire can possibly acquaint readers with the nature of relation between form and experience in case of hybrids, as well as, with the way such a work can be contemplated. What I have in mind is *Hymns to Isis* which are a couple of concrete poems produced by Paula Claire in 1992. The artist hung them on both sides of the mirror in her living room in her house in Oxford.

When we face the mirror, which has the poems on both sides, we can see the reflection of the River Thames. The river can be seen through the windows in Paula Claire's house which is separated from the river by the park. This is the view we can see the reflection of in the mirror – the park with the Thames flowing through it.

The artist tried to investigate where the name of the River Thames originates from. In ancient times the river was called Tamesis, and it is sometimes called Isis in Oxford. The name has inspired Paula Claire to reflect on the term of Isis. Obviously, the first association is the Egyptian goddess Isis who is believed to be the sister and wife of Osiris and the mother of Horus in the Egyptian mythology. In Roman times she was thought to be one of the incarnations of the Mother goddess. In art Isis is often portrayed as a sitting figure with a little Horus on her lap or next to her breast. Many researchers consider this type of goddedd's presentation to be the prefiguration of the picture of the Madonna and the Child Jesus in Christian iconography.

According to Paula Claire gods and goddesses represent our human need to grasp with our mind and imagination the mysterious forces (which she says *expressis verbis*: "For me, the idea of gods and goddesses shows our human desire to comprehend huge and mysterious forces"⁸). Isis is the goddess which represents the sun and moon, the male and female energy, like yang and yin in Chinese philosophy.

The artist has been inspired by the view of the river resembling melted gold at dawn on a January morning, when waves could be observed on the river. That is why the poem representing the yang energy has been written in gold on a white background, and the letters are vibrating because they have been placed alternately and therefore they give a dynamic feeling to the work's recipients.

The poem is called *Isis in Sunshine* by Paula Claire. The second poem, which reflects the yin energy, has been written in silver on a black background, and the letters have been put in separate lines and there is no interaction between them which gives the recipients a feeling of calmness and creates a reflective mood. The poem is called *Isis in Moonlight* and it has been inspired by the view of the Thames in the moonlight.

The ability to contemplate the work by Paula Claire is doubtless. When a recipient finds himself or herself in front of the mirror in the artist's living room which is the most convenient and the only place to perceive the work, he or she experiences the lingual form and also makes use of the colour and movement.

The recipient enters into relation with the reflection in the mirror which sets in motion another chain of events rooted in culture. The meaning of the two poems is the constant arising and multiplying of meanings depending on who stands in front of the mirror.

Despite the fact that the poems by Paula Claire are deeply rooted in reality and culture, thanks to their form they come, to some extent, to be independent from the River Thames, they become separate things and they can penetrate other contexts of reality, as well as shape the recipient's experience in their act of contemplation.

Tactile experience of experience

More and more frequently it is emphasized by scholars that the process of contemplation is impossible in case of the most recent works. In the times of *aisthesis* reconfiguration, term coined by Wolfgang Welsch, we cannot

⁸ The quote comes from my talk with Paula Claire which took place on September 2, 2013 at her house in Oxford.

talk of contemplating works because they require the multisensory perception. The contemplation model in its traditional meaning assumed that the eye was privileged, it had been highest in the hierarchy of senses for centuries. In modern culture eyesight is no longer favoured in any way. Welsch remarks that eyesight "is no longer – neither in the world of modern physics, which is not based on what we can see with our own eyes, nor in the media – the reliable sense applied to keep in touch with the reality, as it was believed in the past" (Welsch 2005: 127).

Modern art requires multisensory perception as well. It will be certainly useful for the recipients of A.M.D.G. by Jim Butler⁹. The purpose of the artist was to produce a work which would enable him to express his reflection on growing up in the 1970s and 1980s, his friends from that time, and on attending a catholic school.

Butler has been wondering what kind of form would be the most appropriate to bear such experiences. He has decided that the form of a book would provide recipients with an intimate experience when they hold the work in their hands, and at the same time what they hold in their hands is not an insignificant wrapping of the text written inside.

The artist quotes the opinion of Ulisses Carrión and he considers the form of the book to be a sequence of spaces, and if each of these spaces is viewed at a different moment, a book is also a sequence of moments (which he recalls explicitly: "A book is a sequence of spaces. Each of these spaces is perceived at a different moment – a book is also a sequence of moments" (U. Carrión, *The New Art of Making Books*).

For that reason every page of A.M.D.G. is structured in a particular way, in order to "read" it recipients must understand all the elements of its structure. The tactile experience of the book is of utmost importance, the experience is not only an additional aspect of the perception apart from the eyesight perception, but it is as important as experiencing it through eyes.

The following pages of the book are structured in such a way that recipients can feel what they can see. The author plays with recipients and the game is the tactile experience of the book's space. The tactile experience of particular pages gives recipients the impression as if they were touching reality as "told" by Butler.

⁹ Jim Butler – born in Dublin, lives in Cambridge, he has produced artistic books and other forms in which we can observe words integrated with the picture; he lectures in the Cambridge School of Art in Anglia Ruskin University. More infomation on the artist and his works can be found on the website http://www.jimbutlerartist.com

Jim Butler's book sets in motion many receptors, both – "mental" and "physical". The experience of A.M.D.G. begins at the moment when we touch the texture of the paper, we get familiar with the shape, and even with the weight of the book. Similarly as in the case of concrete poetry it has been the recipient who has filled up a concrete poem with his or her experience, who has completed the work in front of them with their own context, who has given the work a unique meaning through their experience. The same situation appears in the case of Jim Butler's A.M.D.G.

It's a risky statement to make but in the case of liberatic books we deal with similar processes of struggling with the form. In other words, the recipient in a way produces A.M.D.G., and in the perception process he or she again and again sets the rules of the work's perception.

For that reason the experience of Butler's book is different every time, the context of perceiving the book changes which is typical of every aesthetic experience. It needs to be emphasized that experiencing such works as A.M.D.G. is characterized by the fact that the multi-material structure requires to be experienced differently every single time: to change the order, the perspective of what to focus on, to experience more tactily and less perceptively with the eyesight or the other way around. Works of this kind can be determined by experience because the recipient actually produces them in the reception process.

Conclusion

It seems that hybrids are not the reproduction of experiencing reality, its representation or secondary determination. They may be acknowledged to be representatives of the phenomenon of "literature as experience", the term for these artistic works introduced by Ryszard Nycz (cf. Nycz 2007: 22).

In this sense art is the actual and specific experience of reality, art is, as described by the scholar, "the figure without which <<th>esthe silent masses of the unformulated inside of us>> (to use the term coined by Schulz) would never reach the threshold of consciousness and the conceptual and lingual formation of one's own identity" (Nycz 2007: 22).

At the same taking experience into consideration in the discourse does not mean that its sensual, deprived of reflection and meaning dimensions cannot still function in a work. Some aspects of the work, possible or impossible to express/show, are encoded in the work, in its "not fully explored theme of the semantic potential of its semiotic material", as written by Nycz (Nycz 2007: 22), and cannot be restored in the recipient's experience.

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